



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:



LUIS GAZZOLA
President

Greetings to all VGA members, associates and industry supporters.

We have experienced a very cold winter without rain. Spring rains are urgently required otherwise growing areas will be in serious trouble. Governments must utilise taxpayer's money in resolving the water shortage issue. Media reports state that the Victorian Government is providing State wide recycled water projects; once again we are being bluffed. The State Government must act immediately and fund the projects to provide recycled A class water; instead of allowing water to be wasted at the

Gunnamatta and Werribee outfalls. Growers should be provided with an incentive to use recycled water at the right price. All Polluters should be targeted to bear the cost of recycling not the end users.

Despite the formation of the Market Users Strategic Alliance, State Government representatives remain adamant that they only want to communicate with market users who agree to be relocated. This stand-over attitude has created a more solid alliance and market users are united in remaining at Footscray Road. The slogan "we are not moving" is well documented with the media after two rallies by market users over the past two months.

Anyone with a business interest at the Footscray Road Wholesale Market large or small should register their support with the alliance group to stop this relocation cost burden on Victorian Taxpayers.

The draft proposal by the Federal Government covering restrictions in the use and movement of fertilisers and chemicals is a serious blow to the horticultural industry. In meeting with Federal Minister for Agriculture Hon Peter McGauran, representatives from the VGA and VFF were advised that this is national security policy in response to worldwide action against terrorism. Chemicals and fertilisers were being targeted because of the combination of explosive materials. Some of the listed products were essential to the horticultural industry and it was stated that advisors to the Federal Government should visit growers and see how fertilisers are stored and used on the farm before recommending restrictions that could be very costly to those on the land.

There is a petition being circulated throughout the horticultural industry and I recommend that all growers sign in protest to the proposed draft restrictions.

The VGA has registered its objections to the proposed vision for the future and new constitution being introduced by AUSVEG. The VGA executive at its recent monthly

Continued Page 2

NOTICE OF 2006 VGA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members are invited to the 2006 VGA Annual General Meeting to be held on **Friday 6 October 2006** at the Holiday Inn on Flinders, 575 Flinders Lane, Melbourne commencing at 4.00pm.

This is an opportunity for all members to have their say and nominate for the executive committee.

The notice of meeting and invitation to attend is being distributed for further details contact the VGA office.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE VICTORIAN VEGETABLE INDUSTRY? LOG ON TO WWW.VGAVIC.ORG.AU

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2006

VGA PRESIDENT

Luis Gazzola 0418 172 320

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

David Wallace 0408 547 708

JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENT

Frank Ruffo 0411 144 223

TREASURER

David Wallace 0412 547 708

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Peter Cochrane, 0418 392 113

Robert Nave, 0417 301 578

John Costa, 0418 582 533

Joseph Fragapane, 0418 391 288

Anthony Mason, 0412 591 899

Silvio Favero, 0417 455 610

Paul Gazzola, 0418 556 366

Frank LaMattina, 035 998 5225

Tom Schreurs, 0418 591 699

Paul Temuskos, 0412 955 667

Rocky Lamattina 0416 056 458

Tony Imeson, Executive Officer
Office: 03 9687 4707 Mobile: 0414 458 561

email contact@vgavic.org.au

PLEASE NOTE THE NEW

CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

PO Box 4837 Wantirna South Vic 3152

Office: 03 9038 5091

Fax: 03 9038 4493

Mobile: 0429 990 553

Email: ido@vgavic.org.au

DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Victorian Vegetable Grower and the Vegelink newsletter is to communicate to the Victorian vegetable industry a sample of the activities that are being carried out in the State in relation to the VGA and the national vegetable levy. The information provided should not be interpreted as an advice or recommendation of any kind. The VGA and its officers disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from your relying on any information in this publication.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S CORNER POST



Tony Imeson. Executive Officer

I had the opportunity to represent the VGA at the NZ Horticulture Conference held in Auckland in early August. 700 delegates were in attendance together with an exhibition of 40 static displays covering industry suppliers' products and technology equipment.

The opening morning provided presentations to all delegates looking at the trends for the horticultural industry from a Government aspect, catering industry expectations and trends for present and future generations.

Throughout the three days there was an opportunity to attend concurrent breakouts. These ranged from the Role in Horticulture for the Food &

Beverage Sector, Domestic Protection from Imported Diseases, Water Threats and Opportunities for Horticulture, Commercialising your Produce, Energy Fuelling Horticulture to 2020 to Direct Selling a Way of the Future.

United Fresh NZ provided an excellent "5 a Day" presentation covering the development of the programme since 1994. There had been success with early childhood centres, primary schools and the achievements with consumer recognition of a health fruit and vegetable daily intake.

An interesting panel session featured on how the news media viewed the horticultural industry and it was interesting to note that the media were very critical that statistics for horticulture were out of date before being published. Sounds familiar to Australian statistics in horticulture!

The final day allowed each commodity product group to address delegates. An engaging session was the presentation by an Idaho USA potato grower who is the current Chairman of United Potato Growers of America. This is a recently formed cooperative of

potato growers to combat the impact of supermarket dominance of the potato supply industry. This would have appeared to be an old strategy to Australian growers, however this cooperative is working and providing rewarding results for growers. This was a very well organised conference and full marks to Ron Gall the conference coordinator.

Renewals have been distributed for 2006-2007 VGA membership together with invitations to Victorian vegetable growers not recorded in our current membership files.

We invite any non-member on the mailing list to consider providing support to the VGA in tackling industry issues by becoming a member. Membership application forms are available from the VGA office.

Keep smiling
Tony Imeson
VGA Executive Officer



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: (continued from Page 1)

meeting sent a strong message to the AUSVEG board and administration that they suspend any further development of a new constitution and consider the outcomes from the Vegetable Industry Development Group before any further review and changes to the AUSVEG structure and its current constitution. AUSVEG was formed for vegetable growers utilising vegetable growers levy money to provide research and development projects for the benefit of the vegetable industry. This would appear not to be the viewpoint of the current AUSVEG administration and obviously are not listening to you the levy-paying grower.

This is a concern expressed by other State Organisations and the VGA Executive look to all Victorian Vegetable Growers to support your association with membership ensuring that growers retain control over industry levy funding projects.

There are many issues facing the vegetable industry and the next 12 months will be a test of our strength and unity. May we have health and prosperity for the future? Wishing you all health and prosperity.

Luis Gazzola
President



VGA and Visy Board give award to production horticulture student

At the July meeting of the 2007 National Vegetable Expo Committee, Luis Gazzola (president of VGA) presented Vicki Giacometti with the 2006 Werribee Production Horticulture Award for the best second year student and the most improved student at the college. The VGA would like to congratulate Vicki for her efforts in achieving this award.

Vege.LINK

N E W S L E T T E R

YOUR LEVY AT WORK

Issue 27
•
SPRING
2006

BIG (GOOGLE) BROTHER

By Patrick Ulloa

As I visited a farmer in central Victoria, he asked me if I had already downloaded Google Earth from the Internet. When I answered that I had not seen that program yet, he enthusiastically showed me how it worked. He was able to show me a bird's eye view of a number of places around the world, including the town in South America where I grew up. The picture was very clear. I could even see some cars and buses on the road. When I got back home from my visit, one of the first things I did was to download Google Earth to check if I could see my house in Melbourne. Yes, it was there. I could even see the roof of the garden shed in the backyard.

Apart from its entertainment value, it was clear to me that this technology could have important applications in agriculture. Surely, this technology should be able to easily replace at least some basic applications of aerial photography. To test this idea, I decided to check if I could find some of the vegetable farms that I have visited in the region. I was able to instantly recognise the area including houses and buildings. Any one would be able to draw a fairly accurate farm map based on the images available.



Grower Property

It was easy to start thinking of the future applications of this technology. If we have those images today, I wondered what type of pictures we might be able to obtain in ten or twenty years. Are we going to have images that indicate pest and disease problems? How about nutrient deficiencies? Irrigation needs? Weed affected areas? Even labour efficiency might be able to be monitored one day with an improved version of this technology. And what if you wanted to check your competitors in Australia and other countries? Would it be possible to check their level of production and their potential yields? Perhaps that can be done now, I am not sure. The problem is that if you are able to 'look over the fence' using this technology, your competitors will also be able to see what you are doing. Large customers might one day decide it is in their interest to monitor crops as they grow. Even government agencies might decide they want to know a bit more about farmers.

Don't take me wrong. I am not proposing a new conspiracy theory. I am only highlighting how technology is advancing so rapidly that in some cases we do not have time to consider all the implications, good and bad. Our ability to quickly assess and adopt appropriate technologies is critical if we want to compete internationally. We must be able to rapidly assess the potential impact of emerging technologies so we can select the better ones. The ability to react quickly to the challenges and opportunities presented by technologies such as the ones used by Google Earth will be an important factor in succeeding in an environment where change is happening at an accelerated rate.

EDITOR:

PATRICK ULLOA

Industry Development Officer



PO Box 4837, Wantirna South VIC 3152

Tel: 03 9038 5091 Fax: 03 9038 4493

Mobile: 0429 990 553 Email: ido@vgavic.org.au



Know-how for Horticulture™

The Accomodating Syndrome

There are a number of competing influences that help mould our behaviour. One set of forces that often clash is a desire to do our duty and the need to be liked and fit in. Youth often grow up in subcultures where succeeding is simply not fashionable. They quickly learn that achievement often brings envy and disdain. Stories abound of young people who have buried their talents so as not to appear too successful, talented, or intelligent in the eyes of their friends.

Sooner or later these individuals enter the workforce, where things are not much different. Individuals who are perceived as working too hard are often targeted for punishment by co-workers. When employees become supervisors, foremen or crew leaders these challenges are compounded. As supervisors, such individuals seek the approval of subordinates rather than their own supervisor.

Even though the boss might clearly explain why a task needs to be done a certain way, when it comes time to explain it to the workers, this supervisor is more likely to just blame the change on management. I like to call such behaviours the accommodating syndrome. These supervisors want to be seen as one of the gang: to be liked by the subordinates. When a person decides to favour subordinates without regard to the situation, sooner rather than later he will hurt the enterprise. Such is the case, for instance, when he looks the other way at poor quality work. Or, when his lack of loyalty is an example for all to follow.

Supervisors who yield to the pressures of the accommodating syndrome may be surprised to find out that in the long run they end up losing the respect of both the boss as well as the employees they manage.

Not for a moment am I suggesting that supervisors should only be concerned with the needs of the enterprise without regard to the employees. Such individuals are often autocratic and self-serving, prone to abuse of power and authority. They are willing to climb the organizational ladder at the expense of those they step over. Sometimes they work very fast to impress those in management, but then cannot sustain the pace they have set for themselves. Their loyalty is to themselves. It is not surprising that supervisors who only look at their own needs, or those of management, are greatly detested by employees.

Instead, what is needed is a supervisor who carefully seeks to understand the needs of both management and workers. It is clear to such individuals that effective policies must benefit both the enterprise and the employees if they are to be sustainable. This supervisor is loyal to both the worker and the organization. He is kind but firm—and above all, fair, honest, and full of integrity. Such a person is not afraid to take chances and help management or employees understand the valid concerns the other may have.

This foreman or crew leader does not take pleasure in the authority he has. Sometimes he will have to take flack from employees. With time subordinates will often come around and not only recognize that he acted fairly, but even defend him even when he is not around. Certainly, it takes time and effort to become such a supervisor. The good news is that at least some supervisors are able to leave behind the ugliness of the accommodating syndrome. If you have found such an individual among those who work for you, it is worth going out of the way to retain him.

For more information on agricultural labour management log on to
<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/ucce50/ag-labor/>

Gregorio Billikopf
University of California
(reprinted with permission) © 2006, University of California

Aquaponics pioneers organise field day in Victoria

Aquaponics is the word created by combining 'aquaculture' and 'hydroponics'. Aquaponics is the farming of fish and plants together – so that fish wastes grow plants through organic hydroponics. A third component of this system is the beneficial bacteria that transform the fish waste into suitable nutrients for the plants.

Recently, a field day was organised to show the first commercial aquaponic site in Victoria. The field day was organised by Dr Wilson Lennard and Warren Watkins from Minnamurra Aquaponics. Dr Lennard is Australia's first PhD in aquaponics. Dr Lennard and Warren have partnered to establish an impressive small scale operation to demonstrate how aquaponics works commercially. Minnamurra Aquaponics is located in a small farm in Kinglake West in the central highland foothills of Victoria. The production site is being used to grow Australian Murray cod fish, and basil. Other vegetables are also being trialled. It is expected that this site will be able to advance commercial, educational, and hobbyist aquaponics in Australia.



Warren Watkins (left) and Dr Wilson Lennard inspect one of their aquaponics crops. Photo courtesy of www.urbanag.info

People that attended the field day were able to inspect the insulated shed where fish are grown under controlled conditions. Nearby there is a hydroponics polyhouse where plants are being tested for suitability. Pipes connect both structures to ensure water moves from the fish tanks to the bacterial filters, then to the polyhouse and back to the fish tanks. According to Geoff Wilson, editor of Aquaponics Network Australia, Minnamurra Aquaponics is the simplest operation he has enjoyed inspecting. He found that everything necessary was there, but it has been designed for most

efficient working and minimum chance of problems. According to Geoff, Minnamurra Aquaponics is in sharp contrast to the "spaghetti junction" appearance of many operations he has visited.

Apart from the field day, The Aquaponics Network Australia also organised a series of lectures with a number of international experts, and has prepared a report including the information presented during that event. The report is titled 'Aquaponics Investment in Australia' and can be purchased on line for \$50, or \$75 for a hard copy. For more information, log on to www.urbanag.info

Certainly, aquaponics may have potential for growers attempting to use biological methods as the basis of their hydroponic production, and also as an opportunity for differentiation. Later, a second field day is likely to be organised for growers that were not able to attend this event. Also, a short DVD has been prepared highlighting some basic aspects of aquaponics shown during the field day.

For a copy of the DVD, contact the Victorian Vegetable Industry Development Officer, Patrick Ulloa (0429 990 553);
Email: ido@vgavic.org.au



Dr Lennard thinks that fish in tanks should be given enough space to move. Photo courtesy of www.urbanag.info



The R&D Shop

The order form bellow contains the new materials that have been added to the R&D Shop. You can use this form to order these materials. Otherwise, log on to www.vgavic.org.au

Products		Contents	Qty
DVDs	Lettuce Aphid Field day	It shows how Peter Schreurs & Sons has implemented IPM to control lettuce aphid	
	Simply Green Tomatoes	Presentation given by Marilyn Lanyon telling the story of how she developed a successful value added product	
	Aquaponics field day	Dr Wilson Lennard shows his combined fish and hydroponic operation (aquaponics)	
Manuals and Guidelines	Guide to Common Diseases and Disorders of Parsley	List a large number of diseases and disorders, showing symptoms and suggesting control measures	
Posters	Major diseases of parsley	59x42 cm poster showing symptoms of major diseases of parsley	
	Common diseases of lettuce	84x60 cm poster showing symptoms of lettuce diseases	

Name _____

Street Address _____ Town _____

Postcode _____ Tel _____ Email _____

Send to Patrick Ulloa, Industry Development Officer PO Box 4837 Wantirna South Vic 3152 Fax 03 9038 4493.
Email: ido@vgavic.org.au

Victorian company goes natural

Patrick Ulloa, the Victorian vegetable industry development officer (IDO), was invited by Michael Rogers from greenplanet to visit the company's green waste recycling and composting facility in Epping (North Melbourne). The facility receives green waste from a number of council depots and recycling centres. The facility also receives a by-product from the paper recycling industry. Only long fibres can be recycled into paper products. The short fibres used to be sent to landfill sites. Now, these short fibres are mixed with green waste as a source of carbon to improve the compost produced at the site.

The compost produced by greenplanet undergoes a stringent quality controlled composting process. The mulching machines designed by the company produce different sizes of green waste, which ensures an aerobic (enough oxygen available) composting process. The compost reaches over 60°C which kills the seeds and pathogens that were common in 'council mulch' in the past. The Biological Farmers of Australia audits the process and the product is registered as organic farming input.

The local IDO will be working with greenplanet to set up a trial with a vegetable grower to assess the benefits of the greenplanet compost under vegetable production conditions.

For further information about greenplanet, log on to www.greenplanet.net.au



Composted mulch after processing

Vegetable production students receive new tractor from National Expo Committee

Students at the Gordon Institute of TAFE (Werribee South Campus) are now enjoying the chance to learn advanced practical skills thanks to a new tractor and disc cultivator made available by the National Vegetable EXPO Committee – Werribee. The committee is keen to support the education of young people in the industry, and this contribution will help many students learn those skills that are in demand in the industry. Other organisations that assisted in making this contribution possible are New Holland, R.P. Motors Werribee South, and John Berinds & Son.

David Milburn, one of the teaching coordinators in Werribee, explained that this type of equipment allows student to receive practical lessons that are vital for their professional development. Students attending the college in Werribee are fortunate to have a program which includes this type of work under teacher supervision. Many other students have to go through programs where on the job training is the main teaching method. That can sometimes be less than ideal for students. David explained that in those cases where vegetable growers are very professional and have a strong commitment to student development, on the job training can be rewarding, but unfortunately, not all growers have that type of commitment. Many students are given only minor tasks to perform with little opportunities to come in contact with more advanced technology. In the worse cases, students are only employed as cheap labour.

This wrong attitude towards student development is only a symptom of a more serious image problem that affects the vegetable industry in general. While a number of progressive industry people are adopting an ever increasing level of advanced technology, others still see vegetable production as a backward activity. With that type of image, no wonder there are very few young people that are willing to spend time and effort studying vegetable production. Given the choice, most young people interested in agriculture careers choose amenity horticulture (landscaping, nursery, turf) which has a much better image.



David Milburn shows the new tractor made available by the EXPO committee

In reality, the vegetable industry can provide great career prospects for young people. Seed and fertiliser companies have top jobs available for people with practical industry experience. Larger vegetable businesses are likely to need better qualified people for middle management positions. Good training programs as the one delivered in Werribee need to be enhanced, and more needs to be done by the vegetable industry to project a more positive image that takes into account the advanced technology currently being adopted by many growers. The contribution of the National Vegetable EXPO Committee is a good step in that direction.



Properly guarded farm equipment works...insist on it

WorkSafe Victoria has urged farmers to ensure equipment they're considering buying has appropriate safety equipment. "Whether it's power-take-off guards, seatbelts or rollover protection, safety equipment is not an optional extra," WorkSafe Victoria's Executive Director, John Merritt, said. "Machinery dealers should be supplying equipment as part of the sales package."

A Sydney pump manufacturer was convicted and fined \$18,500 in the Bendigo Magistrates Court in May after pleading guilty to one charge laid under the Occupational Health and Safety Act arising from the death of a farm worker at Lake Boga in 2003. The man died when he became caught in a partially-unguarded universal joint. No guard was supplied with the pump which was attached to a tractor. The man's employer was fined \$20,000 in January 2005.



Thought for Spring

THE PESSIMIST COMPLAINS
ABOUT THE WIND

THE OPTIMIST EXPECTS IT TO CHANGE

THE REALIST ADJUSTS THE SAILS.



HORTICULTURAL TRAINER

Horticultural Skills Australia (HSA) is a specialist school delivering high quality industry-based training to the Australian Horticulture Industry and is a leading pathway provider working in association with Charles Sturt University based in Melbourne, Australia.

Applications are invited to fill fulltime positions of Horticultural Trainers to deliver accredited VET qualifications for the nursery and production horticulture industry.

To be eligible applicants must be tertiary qualified with strong hands on practical skills in nursery practice and production horticulture and must be able to teach a range of units of competency approved for the Australian nursery and production horticulture industry.

Industry accredited trainers with consulting experience in the industry are encouraged to apply.

Attractive remuneration package will be negotiated to get the right person on board.

Suitable applicants should send detailed resumes with contact details of three referees to:

The General Manager
Facsimile: 03- 9654 8833
Email: alvin@hortskills.com.au

National Vegetable Expo – Werribee 2007

The National Vegetable Expo will be held on 3-4 May 2007. The prospectus will be distributed later this month. Expo coordinator Claire Luppino can be contacted on mobile 0427 335 518 or vegexpo@gordontafe.edu.au. Seed trials have been allocated and the participants are South Pacific, Seminis, Westranel, Terranova, Bejo, Fairbanks, Rijk Zwaan, Bioflora, Clause Tezier, Syngenta Seeds and Lefroy Valley

Comprehensive Cover for you and Extra Support for VGA



Now there is a way for you to receive an easy to understand product, tailored to your requirements, backed up by local personal service - and help support the Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria. How is this all possible? Well, by simply calling your local Wesfarmers Federation Insurance (WFI) Area Manager.

The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria is an alliance partner of WFI. As such, the Association receives a small commission each time one of our members takes out or renews a policy with WFI. These extra funds help us to continue to represent and support vegetable growers, and the industry. With WFI you receive personal on-farm service from a local Area Manager. There are 16 WFI branches across Victoria, so you can rest assured that WFI is never far away.

To decide whether WFI's Rural Plan is the right product for you, give them a call on 1300 934 934 to obtain the product disclosure statement and an obligation free quote.

You will not only be helping yourself to comprehensive cover, but also helping your Association. WFI will also have a special offer for members at the VGA annual dinner, your chance to win \$500 towards your insurance premium.

The Vegetable Growers Association of Victoria does not make any recommendation or provide any opinion about this product. Any advice or product information contained above was provided by WFI and does not take into account any individual's objectives, financial situation and needs.

Note: If your business is receiving too many copies, or not enough copies of this newsletter, please contact the Industry Development Officer to correct our mailing list.

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST

If you are not on the mailing list for this newsletter, return this slip by fax on 03 9038 4493
mail to: PO Box 4837, Wantirna South VIC 3152

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE: OCCUPATION:

PHONE: FAX:

EMAIL: